United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Special Representative for former Yugoslavia says UNPROFOR needs 10,600 extra personnel if progress is to continue in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Member States should take concrete action in support of peace.

+ Speakers call for international presence to protect Palestinians as Security Council continues discussion on occupied territories following Hebron Mosque attack.

+ Secretary-General calls on warring groups in Afghanistan to stop fighting immediately in order to end humanitarian emergency; asks Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance to secure access for aid deliveries.

+ Secretary-General congratulates Chief Buthelezi and Nelson Mandela on outcome of their meeting Tuesday; hails President de Klerk's efforts to promote political process in South Africa; pledges continued United Nations support ahead of April elections.

+ Ford Fundation and Yale University, at request of Secretary-General, form Independent Working Group on Future of United Nations; will examine Organization's future in context of global changes since 1945.

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The Secretary-General's Special Representative for the former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, today appealed to Member States to contribute additional personnel to the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). In a press briefing in Zagreb today, he stressed that UNPROFOR would need additional resources and personnel as well as the cooperation of the Bosnian parties if existing cease-fire agreements were to hold and progress to continue.

Mr. Akashi said UNPROFOR required 10,600 additional personnel, of which 4,600 were needed in Sarajevo alone. He expressed gratitude to the States which were already participating in the peace-keeping operation. However, he continued, "we need more, and it's a real test case for Member States to show

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whether their protestations of peace are really backed up by concrete acts and actions." Ideally, the additional personnel would not come from neighboring States, or from States which had had historically special relationships with any of the parties in conflict, he added.

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The Security Council last night held its third meeting on the situation in the occupied Arab territories following last Friday's attack at a Mosque in Hebron, which resulted in more than 50 deaths. Many speakers called for the establishment of an international presence to protect Palestinians in the occupied territories.

The representative of Malaysia said Israel should not reject the proposed international presence if it truly sought a lasting and peaceful solution to the conflict. Ukraine called on the parties to return to the negotiating table, stressing that failure to do so would only encourage extremists. Syria said Israel continued to offer peace in exchange for Arab concessions, rather than peace for land. Israel sought to restore diplomatic relations with Syria, but had indicated that it would leave the question of the Golan Heights to a referendum, as if the matter were a domestic one to be decided by Israeli voters. Bosnia and Herzegovina said the terrorist shelling of Sarajevo and the terrorist massacre in Hebron demonstrated the need to confront ultra-nationalist chauvinism and violence.

The representative of Greece, speaking on behalf of the European Union, expressed outrage over the attack at the Mosque. Although the Israeli authorities had condemned the violence, they must assume responsibility. Israel should act to stabilize the situation in the occupied territories, and should allow an international presence there. The Iranian representative that the attack had been premeditated and led by the elements from "the Zionist army." The Council should call for the liberation of occupied Palestine, the dismantling of Zionist settlements and the return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland, Iran said.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today called on all warring groups in Afghanistan to stop fighting immediately and to resolve their problems peacefully, so as to end the current humanitarian emergency there. He expressed serious concern at the suffering being inflicted on the population of Kabul and at the disruption of humanitarian aid deliveries in the city.

The Secretary-General has asked Sotirios Mousouris, Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan, to continue efforts to obtain unhindered and secure access to all areas in need of humanitarian aid and to report any instances where such access is denied.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has congratulated Chief Mongosuthu Buthelezi, President of the Inkatha Freedom Party of South Africa, and Nelson Mandela, President of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) on the positive outcome of a meeting between the two on Tuesday. In letters to Chief Buthelezi and Mr. Mandela dated 2 March, the Secretary-General welcomed the development of a framework for all political parties to participate in the transitional arrangements, including the electoral process. The "bold initiatives" undertaken would promote national reconciliation and peace in South Africa.

The Secretary-General also wrote to South African President Frederik Willem de Klerk acknowledging his efforts to ensure that all political parties participated in the transitional arrangements. He assured the three leaders that the United Nations would continue to support the peace process in South Africa so that free and fair elections could take place next April.

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Responding to a request by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Ford Fundation and Yale University announced today the formation of an Independent Working Group on the Future of the United Nations. The 12-member Working Group will examine the future of the United Nations in the context of major changes that have taken place since 1945 and update the original vision of the Organization. It will be co-chaired by the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Moeen Qureshi, and the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Richard von Weizsacker.

The Working Group will consider how the United Nations should meet challenges to worldwide peace, security and human welfare at the turn of the century. Staff will be based at the United Nations Studies Programme at Yale University and will consult with experts from organizations and research institutions worldwide. The Group's final report, which will be issued next year, will be distributed to all Member States.

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